

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Account of the ancient fathers, continued. AUGUSTIN. Saint Augustin, Saint Austin, Bishop of Hippo, in Africa. I omit the notorious falsehoods and absurdities detailed as true by this famous saint, on the subjects of monks, monkery and miracles. I shall notice only the accusations of which Barbeyrac has so well furnished the proofs.

St. Austin expresses the most pious and reverential approbation of the good man Abraham's attempt to prostitute his wife Sarah, and of Sarah's great willingness to accede in this respect to the pious wishes of her husband. In which St. Austin is joined by St. Chrysostom and St. Ambrose. *Barb. sur la Mor. des peres* 226—239. He defends in theory (reasoning from the case of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar,) that a wife may lend her husband, and a husband his wife. *Ib. 281 &c.*

He declares (*ib. 290 et seq.*) that all the goods and possessions of the wicked, do not really belong to the ostensible owners and possessors, but to the saints, the righteous, the church of God. He is the first and chief defender of persecution for the sake of religion: the propounder of those tenets, on which the holy inquisition has all along proceeded; and of that pious hatred against heterodoxy, which leads to the extermination of those who are obnoxious to that dreadful charge. The persecution of the reformed in France, is justified on the authority of St. Austin, whose 93d Epist. to Vincent, and 185th to Boniface were translated and republished in defence of that measure. I forget whether that protestant St. Dominic, John Calvin, cites him; but they were a congenial pair.

This grand patriarch of persecution seems to have adopted and embraced with all the ardor of conviction, the following mild and benign precept of the Jewish lawgiver, 13 Deut. 6—10. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother—or thy son—or thy daughter—or the wife of thy bosom—or the friend which is as thy own soul—entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other Gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, namely the Gods of the people which are around about thee, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one and to the other, even the other end of the earth—then shalt thou not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, nor shalt thou spare,

neither shalt thou conceal him ; but thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people : and thou shalt stone him with stones till he die ; because he has sought to thrust thee away from the lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.” Surely, if the Almighty, so impartial, chose to harden the heart of Pharaoh, he has chosen also to harden the hearts of his chosen people, Jewish and Christian ! In what other language the devil could express his cruellest wishes, I am at a loss to conjecture.

By *idolatry* is meant the horrible crime of ceasing to be the dupes of one set of priests, and becoming the dupes of another. Doubtless, burning, crucifying, impaling and torturing, are chastisements too mild for an offence so abominable ! Yet there are Christians, such as our calvinistic presbyterian clergy, who are not ashamed to declare that vile forgery the Pentateuch, and this passage among the rest of it, to be a book dictated and delivered by divine inspiration !

St. Augustin not satisfied with the slowness of proceeding of the council of Carthage in 408, who had determined to write to Honorius on the suppression of the Donatists, wrote himself to Olympius, the favorite of the Emperor, and procured the passage of that law against the Donatists, which subjects them to the punishment of death. Codex Theodos. lib. 16. tit. De Hœreticis leg. 44. It is true, he pretends to be adverse to putting them to death ; but any punishment short of that falls within the due correction, which he wishes to be applied. As to the Pagans, however, he approves highly of the capital punishment to which they were condemned for exercising the religion of their ancestors. See the proofs set forth by Barbeyrac in his *traite de la morale des peres*, quo. 305—307, and also from 193 to 200, to which I have to add that I have myself verified these references in the same edition of St. Augustin’s works, in 10 volumes fol. ed. Paris, 1696, by the Benedictines of St. Maur. The chief passage relating to the persecution of the Donatists referred to by Barbeyrac, is in the life of St. Augustin, lib. 6, chapter 6, page 297. And here I will close my sketch of a set of writers concerning whom it may be truly said, that it is difficult to determine whether folly or knavery were most predominant among them. Writers worthy of no credit, either for their critical acumen, their sound judgment, or their veracity ; qualities which however necessary to the establishment of the cause they would wish to support, they have no real pretensions to. It is melancholy to think, that modern Christianity should depend on the writings of this dishonest class of men, who in addition to their own forgeries and deceptive statements, procured the destruction by law (2 and 3 Jortin’s rem. page 205) of the books of all their opponents, whether called Pagans or Heretics. It is melancholy to think, that the evidence of the genuineness of the Christian gospels, should depend exclusively upon citations, and extracts of men, who cite indiscriminately books undoubtedly forged, and books suspiciously genuine. Men, who had no sense or learning to discriminate—no knowledge of the canons of historical evidence sufficient to preserve them from being deceived themselves—and no honesty to induce them to refrain from deceiving others, by citing what they knew to be forged, and many of them by forging

themselves when it appeared conducive to the cause they had to support. A class of writers who sprang up with Christianity, and whose fraudulent propensities have been but too successfully propagated from their days to ours.*

The first complete list of Christian forgeries was published by Toland, in his *Amyntor*, and more perfect in the first volume of his miscellaneous works; and which has now fully stood the test of criticism. Then Jeremiah Jones published also a good catalogue in his new method of settling the canon of Scripture, vol. 2, page 119; this has been republished at the end of Hone's Collection of the Apocryphal Gospels. Readers in general are content to pin their faith on authority, and do not recur to these learned works of laborious research; otherwise, I do not see how any cause could have survived such a dreadful accumulation of forgery and fraud. The facilities afforded to forgery and interpolation, when all books were manuscripts, were far greater than in the present day.

In giving the preceding account, I have for the most part taken my authorities at second hand, from Dodwell, Middleton, Lardner, Jones, Daillie, Jortin, Mosheim, Barbeyrac, Priestley, Horsley: moderns of distinguished character, well settled in reputation, and unimpeachable; all of them Christians by profession; and to whose fairness, as well as learning, there neither is, or can be any objection. Where my second-hand authority is not cited, I rely on originals as I have quoted them: very many of my second hand authorities, where I thought there could be doubt, I have verified laboriously: and *I profess myself ready to authenticate every original citation that may be really disputed, because I possess the means of doing so:* and if I do not in every case cite the ori-

* That we may understand the general feeling of priests respecting the rest of mankind, whom they usually denominate the people, let us hear one of the doctors of the church. "The people, says Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais, early in the fifth century, (in Calv. page 315) are desirous of being deceived: we cannot act otherwise respecting them. Such was the case with the ancient priests of Egypt; and for this reason they shut themselves up in their temples, and there composed their mysteries out of the reach of the people's eye; (forgetting what he had just before said, he adds) for had the people been in the secret, they might have been offended at the deception played upon them. In the mean time how is it possible to conduct one's self otherwise with the people, so long as they are the people? For my own part, to myself I shall always be a philosopher, but in dealing with the mass of mankind, I shall be a priest."

"A little jargon, says Gregory of Nazienzen to St. Jerom, (*Hieronym ad Nep.*) is all that is necessary to impose upon the people. The less they comprehend, the more they admire. Our forefathers and doctors of the church have often said, not what they thought, but what circumstances and necessity dictated to them.

"We endeavor, says Sanconianthon, (in Euseb. præp. Evang. lib. 3) to excite admiration by means of the marvellous."

Bishop Synesius, Jerom, Gregory of Nazienzen, Eusebius are among the most illustrious fathers of the church; and dreadful rogues they seem to have been! Yet, how much has the Christian world assumed as true, on the authority of these men! It is high time to adopt some common-sense system of historical criticism.

ginal authorities, it is because few persons in the United States are in possession of the books necessary to follow me. I refer therefore for the most part to authors, easy to be procured ; authors, that every man of tolerable learning possesses ; authors that no clerical library ought to want ; and authors absolutely unimpeachable.

I proceed with my next object of enquiry.

What reason have we to prefer the authenticity of the present gospels over cotemporary and acknowledged forgeries ?

I know of none, but the gradual selection made by Melito, Origen, and Jerom, and some other fathers without any sufficient discrimination, without any reason but popular opinion, without any critical examination into their authority, and without any conclusive reason yet assigned, for adoption or rejection.

The following facts are certain :

The Jews of our Saviour's day, *spake* the Syriac language, 5 Mark. 41. 7 Mark 34. 9 Acts 40. 13 Neh. 23 : they *quoted* from the Hebrew; as in that passage of the psalms, Eli Eli lama Sabacthani: He asks for vinegar, says a soldier, misunderstanding him: for Hilon Hely is in Syriac, vinegar. The Hebrew for vinegar is *hhometz*. (One jot) 4 Matt. 18. The Syriac *jot* is smaller than the Hebrew.

If there was any gospel written therefore for the use of the Jews, it would have been a Syriac gospel. None such as an original ever existed, so far as we know. We have a Syriac *version*. Why was a Syriac version necessary? And why were the originals in any other language? Matthew is supposed to have written Hebrew; and the gospel of the Ebionites mentioned by Epiphanius and Jerom, is said to have been in Hebrew: if so, the common Jews could not understand it; for Hebrew ceased to be spoken after the captivity. 13 Neh. 23.

If Matthew wrote a gospel at all, where is the evidence of it? I have searched for it in vain: It does not exist. The author of St. Matthew's gospel, does not say, "I, Matthew, wrote this." I know the supposition, that the Ebionite and Nazarene gospel was St. Matthews: who dare assert this is any thing but bare supposition? Assuredly it is not the original of our common Greek version, for it did not contain the two first chapters of our present copy. Of this original gospel of St. Matthew no known copy ever was seen, by any positive witness to the fact. How comes it that all the gospels are in Greek? The apostles were unlettered, ignorant men, 4 Acts 15; they lived, or are said to have lived, many years in Jerusalem after the death of Christ. Where did they learn Greek? Why did these strict Jews, (for they were so, reproving the time-serving St. Paul because he was not so) why did they write to their own countrymen, in a language which they did not use themselves and which their own countrymen could not understand? Josephus wrote in Syriac for the Jews; and then had his works translated into Greek for the benefit of the learned world.

Who translated Matthew into Greek? From what original? *When* did this happen? Can a book be regarded as authentic whereof we know neither the author nor the language in which it was written, nor when originally published, nor who translated it, nor when it was translated?

These are fatal deficiencies in the evidence. Does this lame account savor of divine origin?

Is there the slightest evidence of any Christian book, anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, or till the close of the first century? I have examined for such evidence in vain. Conjectures abound, but no positive proof or well grounded probability can be pointed out. Indeed, considering the dispersion of that people, and the confusion they must have been in for at least twenty years after that event, it is utterly incredible that any book for the use of the Jews, except the narration of that siege, should have been thought of. They had something else to do than either to compose books or read them.

None of the evangelists to whom the gospels are ascribed, pretend to be the authors of them. None of them seem to know any thing of the existence of the rest, except that Mark and others seem to have borrowed from Matthew, without acknowledgment or reference.

There is no reference to, or any citation from any of these evangelists by name, or by distinct allusion, as the authors of our modern gospels, until Ireneœus, one hundred and fifty years after the death of Christ. Upon what grounds and reason this silly man ascribes them to the four evangelists, no where appears. I call him silly, because I have proved him so.

These gospels appeared cotemporarily with a crowd of forgeries now known to be so, but which were considered in their day as equally authentic with our present gospels: nor is there any good reason why they should not be so considered now.

Jones and Lardner, have with great diligence collected from the ancient fathers, all the quotations and expressions that seem to bear even a remote similarity to sentences and expressions in our modern gospels: hence they infer, that these sentences and expressions so collected by them, are copied and cited from our modern books; which must then have existed. But gospels known to be forged are cited by the ancient writers indiscriminately with those supposed to be genuine; and from whence the passages are taken no where appears; they may as well be from the one class as from the other. All is doubt, conjecture, supposition: nothing clear, distinct, and certain. The oldest evidence relating to our present gospels, is so intermingled with the equal pretensions of fraud and forgery, that we cannot trace when our present gospels got footing among Christians. Here is a revelation; one would reasonably expect that if it is to come to us at second-hand, and if instead of a revelation to *us*, we are required to be content with a story of a revelation to *others*—we have good right to expect that the whole account should be void of dispute and difficulty; but we find nothing but doubt and darkness, fraud and forgery, on all sides; and we are left to grope our way out of his chaos of gospels as well as we can. In our anxious search after truth, we call out, let there be light! but there is no light; darkness still rests on the face of the deep. *Sedet, in aeternumque sedebit!*

No Pagan writer gives us any aid. We hear of Christians, and Christ as popular rumors, or in a vague and general way, from Pliny the younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius—but nothing certain, nothing particularized; no history of the sect; no authentication of any gospel fact; no men-

tion of any of the books or writings of the Christians; no Christian writer, numerous as the Christian forgeries were, is once noticed by the learned Pagans of the day; the Christians seem to have been confounded with the Jews. All the books of the new testament, although if genuine they must be widely spread in the days of Tacitus and Suetonius, are to these classic authors, as if they had never existed; which indeed is almost the only rational way of accounting for this utter silence and neglect concerning them.

Who wrote the gospel of Mark? Mark does not claim it; the other evangelists do not ascribe it to him. When was it written? Where? To whom? What, my Christian friends! not an answer to any one of these important questions?

Who wrote the gospels of Luke and John? Who were these men so called? What evidence is there beyond supposition and conjecture, and that perfectly gratuitous that these were the persons of Christ's own days? When and where were these gospels first published? Who cites them before Ireneus?

I challenge any Christian to answer these questions satisfactorily, abiding by the common rules of ascertaining that a work is really the work of the author to whom it is ascribed. I know how many fallacious pages can be penned, of declamation grounded on conjecture and possibility. I know that no evidence properly so called can be adduced in support of these books, that would not be scouted in the most lax and careless court of justice. Of direct and positive evidence in support of these books, there is none. But is it doubtful evidence that we are to expect from divine inspiration? Is our religious belief to depend on the anxious and difficult, and indeed impossible task of securing by much learned and laborious research, the forged evidence from the true? Are these the terms and conditions imposed upon every honest inquirer into the truth of the Christianity he is required to believe! Of the hundred books either carefully read through, or diligently and faithfully consulted by me on the present occasion, the ancient fathers from Justin Martyr to Augustin, leaving out the apostolic fathers, consist of thirty volumes in folio: and I can solemnly declare, that I have no motive or interest in this enquiry direct or indirect, but to search out the truth for my own guidance, and for the sake of others to declare it as I find it. What kind of Christianity is that, which men take upon trust from their parsons; Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Socinian, Calvinist, Lutheran, Arian or Trinitarian? From parsons, nine-tenths of whom in these United States never took the trouble of investigating the grounds and foundations of their own faith, and who have neither the learning, the leisure, nor the library that will enable them to do it. A class of men more ignorant of all useful knowledge than any other in the community: a class of men more proud, more conceited, more ambitious, more money-loving and avaricious, more intolerant, and more eaten up by the esprit de corps, than any other known class; and who have voluntarily disqualified themselves from being witnesses in the cause now before us, by receiving pay and emolument for preaching and advocating one side of it, and abusing as infidels all those who not being interested in the question beyond the common interest that truth excites, see reason to

adopt the other side. Fellow citizens, I appeal to your good sense, who are most likely to mislead you; those who basking in the sunshine of popular prejudice are hired, paid, bribed to take up one side of a question, and who live by supporting and defending it—or those who come before you, unprotected, unpaid, unbribed, unhired and unprostituted? Judge for yourselves as a jury would judge; deciding on the common rules of testimony.

Moreover, how can you expect truth from the lips of men whom you hire to foster and defend all your preconceived opinions on religious subjects? All the absurd stories which you have heard, and all the absurd and intolerant opinions forced upon your pliant understandings, during the long period from the nursery to college? Who if they were to venture in a fit of honest conviction, to avow opinions inconsistent with your prejudices, would be rewarded by being turned out to starve? Is it from such men you can expect to hear truth! No: it is from those who do not depend upon your base hire; who are indifferent whether the truth pleases or offends you, who are willing to encounter popular prejudice, and to seek and to speak the truth through evil report and through good report—it is from such persons, who feel their own independence, and who acknowledge no obligation except to what is honest, just, and true—it is from such and such only that you will hear and read, what a truth-seeking spirit alone can dictate.

PHILO VERITAS.

JUDGE HERTTELL'S DEMURRER.

Mr. Editor—I have no doubt but we shall all agree that the *Jesuitical Spiritual court of Inquisition*, first invented in this republic by Mr. Justice Yates, and sanctioned by Chief Justice Spencer, of the Supreme Court of the State of New-York, has just been blown sky high by Judge Herttell, of the city of New-York, in a work entitled “the Demurrer, or proofs of error in the decision of the Supreme Court of the state of New York, requiring faith in particular religious doctrines, as a qualification for witnesses; thence establishing by law a religious test, and religious creed.”—By Thomas Herttell.

“Every man has a right to form, to cherish, and to express his own opinions; and if errors of the understanding are to be the subject of reproach and hostility, there is no man however upright or talented, who can escape denunciation and proscription.”—*Governor Clinton's last message.*

With what a happy counterpoise does *Justice* hold the balance: when the liberal CLINTON and JEFFERSON are in one scale, and the bigoted Judges in the other, as you will find to be the case! The author has not even left the Supreme Judges a single atom of their visionary throne of bigotry, from which they presumed to dictate or control over the *religious opinions* of free born Americans; whilst the free exercise of them is guaranteed to every man by their Constitution.

The “*Spiritual Court of Inquisition*,” alluded to, was that established by the case of Jackson ex dem Tuttle, vs. Gridley, 18th volume Johnson's Reports, page 98, and tried before Mr. Justice Yates, in June 1819. The gist of this enquiry was that Amos Gridley, a witness for defendant,

once did not believe in the existence of a God, or future punishments : and yet was sworn ; but pronounced by the court to be *unworthy of credit*, though another *unimpeached* witness confirmed all that Gridley had sworn. Thus *usurping a power of condemning a man's religious sentiments, and blasting his character, without any "trial by his peers,"* as the Constitution requires. And as neither their law nor Constitution, nor their religion or morality, authorizes any tribunal whatever to make any "*spiritual inquest*" concerning any man's religious opinions, Mr. Herttell proves in the most satisfactory manner, that they have not only formed a "*union of church and state,*" but likewise *usurped the powers of a "Spiritual Court of Inquisition," &c.*

This work abounds with irresistible proofs and arguments at every page. And certainly contains a mass of the most irrefutable, legal, logical, philosophical, theological and philanthropic discussions that ever was condensed within the same number of pages. It also contains, a brief expose of that rotten system the "*common law*" of England, which has involved our Judges in the pursuit of this "*ignis fatuus.*" And likewise a few words of good advice to Judge Hall-well, of Philadelphia, concerning a similar bigoted decision of his.

These '*Supreme Judges,*' have forgotten what their *Supreme Judge and Lord* commanded them on the subject of religious opinions: "*Judge not, that ye be not judged;*" and though the circuit Judge who first scratched this commandment out of his bible, might be excusable on account of a "*beam in his own eye,*" or a family propensity for "*church and state*" dominion, yet who would ever have imagined that so bright a sun as that of the mind of the Chief Justice, should ever have been obscured by a paltry "*mote in his own eye.*"

The "*Demurrer*" is a work that ought to be in the hands of every judicial officer, as well as every member of the bar ; inasmuch as other Judges in other states, are repeating the wrong done to the people of the state of New-York ; and citing that outrage as a precedent for theirs—and as Judge Herttell has annihilated every plea or pretension to that power, the people cannot fail to feel grateful for the Herculean task which he has just performed. Nor is the work intended for the Bench and Bar alone ; for the theologian and philanthropist will find something to interest them likewise.

Judge Herttell is well known as the philanthropic author of several other works, all equally interesting to the public ; to wit, "*An Expose of the cause of Drunkenness, &c.;*" "*Remarks on Imprisonment for Debt, &c.*"—In another, he has likewise proved, beyond the power of cavil, that all our *Penal Laws* in favor of *SUNDAY*, are as *unconstitutional* as they are *contrary to all the commandments in the Bible*, on the same subject.

Very respectfully, your friend,

C. SCHULTZ.

P. S. It is now many months since Judge Herttell presented me with a copy of his "*Demurrer,*" and likewise since I sent a copy of this review to the *National Intelligencer* ; but which never made its appearance in that paper—probably because it might occasion the loss of a few subscribers.

MR. SCHULTZ.

Mr. Editor—This gentleman it appears is about to commence a formidable attack upon yourself and one or two other individuals in this city against whom he has taken umbrage. Now, although I am well assured he would meet from you a much more dreadful repulse than did another famous knight-errant of old, in his celebrated *charge* upon a windmill, I shall yet beg leave to interpose a small *demurrer* against the passing of his challenge ; and, if not to break a lance, to have at least a little friendly parlance with him. Your readers will probably recollect the name and writings of this gentleman in the 2nd vol. of the *Correspondent*. He therein repeatedly denies any belief either in the pentateuch or the New Testament, and yet, (absurd as such vacillating conduct must appear) page 159, says “he believes in the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments;” and that he “is of the same religion as the first pair of mortals were.” I, therefore, Sir, in the name of consistency and common sense, protest against Mr Schultz being heard again until he makes the *amende honorable* by a public recantation of one or the other of his *beliefs*. For my part, I hope he will continue to maintain his theory of a God, a soul and a place where those souls are tormented ; for those of the opposite party, (of which number I rank myself, although Mr. Schultz formerly denounced me as a *priest*) can expect no real support from one who has manifested such unblushing inconsistency. I hope, if the gentleman notices these remarks he will be so good as to give us a brief description of a God, a soul, a heaven and a hell ; taking it for granted that no man believes in the existence of any thing of which he has not *some* correct knowledge or idea. In conclusion, I would further request him to inform us wherein lies the distinction between the words *deism* and *theism*, as the blundering lexicographers of the present day appear to consider them perfectly synonymous.

S.

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1829.

NEW ARRANGEMENT.

In compliance with the wishes of a considerable number of our subscribers, we have concluded on introducing into the *Correspondent* a greater variety of topics than usually occupy its pages.

Hitherto, we have confined ourselves chiefly to *theological* discussions ; and in the five volumes of our work now before the public, will, probably, be found nearly all the argument, pro and con, that can be advanced on this subject. To confine ourselves, therefore, to this course, would only be to repeat, perhaps in a new dress or form, what we or our correspondents have already advanced ; whereas, by resorting to the fields of natural philosophy, literature, and the common occurrences of life, much novel matter might be gleaned materially conducive to the advancement of truth. Not that we intend in any way to abandon liberal principles, or to relax in our efforts to overthrow superstition. Convinced as we are by continued experience, that a belief in supernaturals is the true source of all the misery which afflicts the human family, its entire subversion shall always be our principal aim. The introduction of other

topics, will be auxiliary to this important end ; and by this combination of instruction and rational amusement, we hope to be able to render our journal more extensively useful and interesting.

To effect the object contemplated, our paper will be *enlarged* so as to embrace about one third more matter than it contains at present ; and as this will considerably increase the expense of publication, the subscription will be necessarily raised from \$3 to \$4 per annum. Subscribers who have already settled for the current year, and who may wish to continue under the proposed arrangement, will thus have fifty cents to pay, to entitle them to receive vol. 1 of the new series.

The losses we have sustained by defaulters, renders it imperative that no departure in future should take place from our original conditions. Those, therefore, who may have neglected at the close of the present volume (of which only *one* number remains to be printed) to pay up their arrears, will be considered as having discontinued the paper.

A few *complete* sets of the *Correspondent*, making *five* handsome volumes, Svo. may still be had at the original subscription price, \$1,50 a volume. The following are also for sale at the office of the Correspondent.

Liberal Tracts, from No. 1 to 8, inclusive, \$1 for 1000 pages.

Ecce Homo! or, a Critical Enquiry into the history of Jesus of Nazareth; 12mo. bds. 75 cents ; bound and gilt, \$1.

Volney's Ruins of Empires; with the Law of Nature; a new translation, with plates, large edition bound and gilt, \$1.25.

The God of the Jews and Christians; embellished with a correct likeness, 25 cents.

View of the Metaphysical and Physiological Arguments in Favor of Materialism, 25 cents.

The Scripture Doctrine of Materialism, 25 cents.

The Elements of Modern Materialism. By Charles Knowlton, M.D. Svo. bound, \$1.50.

* * * In the press, and shortly will be published, an essay on the *Right of Free Discussion*, from the pen of one of the ablest philosophical writers in this country. It will extend to about 50 pages, 12mo. and be sold at 25 cents.

Those taking quantities of the above publications will be allowed a liberal discount.

Christianity and Mahomedanism.—It is a constant theme of the religious, that the intention of God in sending Jesus Christ into the world, was to extend his mission “to the uttermost ends of the earth,” that the people of all nations might be equally benefitted by its blessings ; and although, of nearly a thousand millions of inhabitants, not a third of these have even heard of this sublime religion, we have it every day reiterated by the priests, “that the knowledge of the lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.” Were not the mass of the community completely swayed by their spiritual guides, they would long ere this have perceived, that instead of Christianity becoming every day more extended, it has been retrograding for several centuries, and is now banished from most of those places where it was originally promulgated,

and where its doctrines had once an almost unlimited sway. Its founder assured his followers, that the "gates of hell would not prevail against it;" yet before six centuries had elapsed from its birth in Asia it was wholly driven out of that quarter of the globe, and has ever since been superceded by Mahomedanism. The priests of Christianity are extremely careful, particularly in the United States, to conceal this fact from their deluded flocks, and some of them have had the hardihood to deny it altogether. Even those historians, inimical to Mahomet, who formerly professed to give a faithful sketch of the life of the prophet of Mecca, have touched so lightly on the fact of Christianity having previously reached the plenitude of its power in the country now occupied by the Saracens, that they evidently wished to divert the attention of the public from a circumstance so injurious to the character of their religion. As an exception, however, to this course, we find, in a work, which has just appeared in London, entitled "Mahomedanism Unveiled;" by Dr. Forster, an English clergyman, the following admission of the ascendancy which that faith has acquired over Christianity:—

"Another feature of Mahomedanism, scarcely less remarkable than the permanence and completeness of its mental domination, is its power to change alike the creeds and characters of the nations it has subjected to its yoke, and those of its conquerors. Under the former aspect, its prompt and effectual anticipation of the idolatry of Arabia, and the unparalleled revolution of mind and manners, which the action of the new religion produced among its tribes were but preludes and precursors to succeeding triumphs, in every clime where Paganism flourished, over Paganism in its most degraded forms. The rude idolatry of Scythia, or of inner Africa, and the refined and venerable superstition of the Persian Magi, alike fell prostrate before the law of the Koran; while the new converts, bound together as brethren by this common tie, forgot their personal prejudices, and national antipathies, as they fought side by side for the propagation of their adopted faith. But the memorable achievements of the followers of Mahomet, in subverting idol creeds, sink into insignificance in comparison with another triumph of Mahomedanism, the almost utter subversion of Christianity in the east. This divine religion, which originally won its lowly and peaceful way in triumphant opposition to the utmost violence of political power, bowed itself to the dust, in the very regions whence it first emanated, and where for centuries it had most flourished, almost without struggle, under the sword and law of Mahomet. The strange and startling anomaly, which thus eclipsed the sun of Christendom, and which has left it for the space of twelve hundred years, 'shorn of half its beams,' remains to the present hour unparalleled and unexplained. Every conquering faith besides has merged eventually in the Christian; but the banner of the cross itself has been seen to succumb before the victorious progress of the crescent. Nor is the power of Mahomedanism more remarkable in its influence, as conquering, to subvert, than in its efficacy, as conquered, to absorb, the religions with which it has come in contact. For irrefragable vouchers of this characteristic, the reader needs only be referred to the history of the Turks and Tartars. The successive invasions of the Saracen empire of these Pagan hordes, during the eventful period of its

decline, determined uniformly in the conversion of the barbarian conquerors. The Gaznavide and Seljukian sultans, who shook, and the successors of Genghis Khan, who overthrew, the throne of the Caliphs, vied with one another in the adoption of the Mahomedan faith. And the fourteenth century invites the philosophical historian to survey, in the career of the celebrated Tamerlane, the singular spectacle of a Tartar proselyte penetrating into India for the avowed purpose of bowing that vast peninsula to the yoke of the Koran. The enthusiastic zeal of this conqueror for propagation of the Mahomedan religion, thus founded eventually in India, the Mahometan empire of the Great Mogul."

These facts militate at once against the divinity of the Christian religion; for if it really emanated from the almighty, and he had resolved on its universal promulgation, not all the powers of earth or hell could have dislodged it from a spot where it was once established. The truth is, Christianity like all other systems of religion, was the work of intriguing and crafty man, and, therefore, liable to be subverted by other men more powerful or more designing. We are far from thinking that the change was beneficial to the human race—We regard all religions as pernicious, because they are based in error; and until the prevailing creeds are rooted out by the advance of liberal principles; until mankind are convinced of the necessity of fully investigating all systems presented for their belief, they will never be free nor happy. If religion cannot be maintained by facts and arguments, it will inevitably fall, although it may be attempted to prop it by the force of numbers, or by the influence of men in power. So long as the printing press continues unrestricted, it is as clear as the noon day sun that superstition, however extensive may be her sway, cannot be maintained against the published knowledge of the present age.

MISCELLANEOUS.

VOLTAIRE.

Concluded from page 383.

The regency of Philip of Orleans, however dissolute as to morals and manners, was comparatively philosophical on the subject of religion. The usual re-action had, in fact, begun to take place; and that contemptuous indifference was engendering for religious disputation, which never fails to follow an excess of it. The enormous power and influence of a corrupt, intolerant, and ambitious clergy, was, however, a stationary evil in France; and there was always sufficient going forward to keep in activity so determined and indefatigable an opponent as Voltaire. The despicable reign of Louis XIV. was certainly not much encumbered with the devotion or fanaticism of the monarch; but the horrible iniquities practised by the provincial parliaments; the bigotted prosecutions which disgraced the local jurisdictions; and the protection these atrocities received from the episcopacy, remained. However divided into factions and engaged in interminable contests

among themselves about the grace of God, the dignified clergy uniformly threw their effective shield over the blundering cruelties which were perpetrated in the genuine spirit of intolerant orthodoxy. It is scarcely necessary to advert to the horrible instances of Calas, and the poor youth, the Chevalier de la Barre, in which Voltaire directly interfered, and the recital of which harrows up the soul of shuddering humanity. These, with other misjudgments and persecutions as decided if not so excessive, formed part of the everyday practice of obscure tribunals, the proceedings of which Voltaire—and ever honoured be his memory for it—dragged into open day. Was it not enough that a priesthood, enormous in power, in wealth, and in influence, formed an eternal guard over the miserable bigots who perpetrated these cruelties, and opposed like a Macedonian phalanx every enlargement of mind or of practice, of tolerance or of liberality, to sanction the war of philosophy against it? Talk of the enmity of philosophy to religion! What was that in France which was called religion but, as at present in Spain, a monster in deadly enmity to every species of social and political improvement, which it opposed in all forms and at every avenue? To love mankind, and to endeavor to lower its plethora and extract its teeth and its nails, amounts to the same thing. The struggle was between mighty elements, and happily the lover employed by philosophy was temporarily, at least, the strongest.

"Aye, but then look at the revolution, the horrors of which were mainly attributable to the labors of the philosophers," exclaim the alarmist sages. "Eldest of beings Chaos first arose," said the Tutor of the boy Epicures to him one day; "And Chaos whence?" returned the future sage. The horrors of the revolution were *not* attributable to the philosophers, even supposing their writings to have been so generally influential as is often asserted; but to the evils and the horrors which gave force and substance to their objections. Is it to be supposed that the facts did nothing, and the representation of them every thing? Ages of profligacy, of oppression, and of misgovernment, must sooner or later produce re-action every where, even without philosophers; as for instance in Spain. The Parisian mob acted the usual part of revolted slaves. Composed of the lower part of a populace, which had no previous political existence, no rights, and consequently no experience in the mode of exercising them, they acted accordingly. As to their irreligion, it was the necessary consequence of the eternal contemplation of such pietists as Louis XIV. and his courtiers, and of the corruption and profligacy of the clergy in general. That the writings of Voltaire and others had some effect on the language of these men, is evident enough; but as to violence and proscription, it was the result of the impetuosity of the national character thus suddenly let loose.

All this, in fact, is mere coloring: the French revolution was the breaking out of a mighty ocean of corruption and misrule, and as no dam could be supplied by a cowardly and imbecile royal family, and a noblesse of *petits maitres*, who all ran away, affairs took their course. Political bodies and communities ought to have stood in the gap, but no such things had been allowed to exist in France. There were parliaments undoubtedly, whose enviable privileges had been reduced to the

right of registering the king's edicts in the face of their own opposition. If despotism will govern all by itself, it must take the consequences when it has created a state of things which it can govern no longer.

To conclude : in as far as regards the operation of the philosophers, and of Voltaire in particular, it is the duty of superior intellects to be eternally active and restless against oppression and misgovernment, and to diffuse the superior light which it has collected. It is the duty of governments, on the other hand, to be the first to receive these lights, which are sure in the end to become general ; and if, instead of this, they studiously reject them, the baleful consequences are of their own creation : society at large cannot and will not wait for them. The writings of Voltaire and his coadjutors, at great personal risk, pointed out abuses which were becoming unbearable ; they were unmolested to, and the result is a matter of history. Wisdom, in the proper place, might have made it better ; but the consequences might have been worse. Enormous as was the temporary endurance, it bears no comparison with the aggregate amount of oppression and suffering in the two reigns of Louis XIV. and XV.; and to present and future France, even with a Bourbon on the throne, the great gain is unequivocal.

Souls or Spirits.—If we consider for a moment the number of human beings who are born and die daily, and then make a calculation of the number arithmetically for one thousand, or ten thousand years, we shall soon drop the idea of the soul or spirit being in a distinct form after the death of the body. All space would have been choked with spirits ere this, unless they had the faculty of destroying each other. A parson of a dissenting congregation in England has given it as his opinion that on our globe sixty persons were born on an average, in one minute : and that as many persons died in the same space of time. According to this our globe alone would supply the air with 3,600 spirits in one hour ;—in one day, 86,400 ;—in one week 604,800 ;—in one month, 16 millions 934,400 ;—in one year 220 millions 147,200 ;—in ten years 2 trillions 201 millions 472,000. What then must be their increase to calculate for hundreds and thousands of years. No wonder, then, that they who believe in the existence of such spiritual beings, should say that they fill the air, and superstitiously assert we only want the eyes of our mind to be opened to find ourselves surrounded by them.

Morality.—That the mere *belief* in any particular opinions, has no connexion with the *practice* of morality or immorality, will be acknowledged by every candid mind. Religionists labor hard to show that atheism is demoralizing. But a very little reflection, and a slight observance of the practices of mankind, will show that *speculative opinions and morality, are two distinct things.* We have daily proofs of the immorality of Christians, and we cannot shut our eyes to the vices of atheists. It is a folly then to bring forward great moral or immoral characters, as evidence of the truth or falsehood of any particular doctrines. If Christians were actually the strictest moralists in existence, and if the bible

contained the purest code of morals ever published, I should neither believe in revelation, nor in the existence of immaterial beings ; and if atheists were the greatest villains upon the face of the earth, I should lament that they should be such enemies to their own, and to others' happiness ; but I should still be an atheist. A great part of the world resemble the followers of the capulets : they imagine that they are perfectly justified in extorting, receiving, defaming and cheating, provided the " law is on their side," or provided there is no law to take cognizance of their misdemeanors. These people form a numerous class amongst the Christians, and many a time I have had occasion to mark how logically they reconcile their practice with their professions. But no body of men is free from this mean herd ; and of course they are to be found in the ranks of irreligion and patriotism. Some of these, I can observe, with truth, justice, and patriotism, on their lips, are guilty of a thousand meannesses and dirty tricks of which no honest man would be guilty, and which in my opinion, mark them as unprincipled and contemptible characters.

The Devil.—Is it not curious that no one ever saw or heard of a devil before they saw Jesus ? And, that as soon as he left them, away went the devils ! for no devil has ever been seen since. Though John said that they were only to be for a short time : and as he is the only one among them all that has attempted to describe a devil, let us read what he says about them in his revelations, for in his gospel he takes no more notice of them than if there never were such animals.—In the 12th Chapter of revelations he informs us, that it was a great red dragon, by which it appears that the devil is not so black as he is painted ! having seven hands and ten horns. If God made the devil, why did he make him with seven hands, when he himself has but one, if man be made in the image of God ? Besides a very long tail, and a mouth large enough to contain a flood of water ! That he was considered as being one of the wonders in heaven, a woman being the other ! But this red dragon, or devil, or satan, or old serpent, as he is called, having a quarrel with one Mr. Michael, they and their angels or soldiers fought together, when Mr. Devil got the worst of the battle, and was cast out of heaven into the earth, whereto he fell like lightning, as Jesus says, with all his army. In consequence of which he became very wroth with the inhabitants of the earth, and went about to and fro seeking whom he might devour. I think that if Mr. Michael had cast him into some other world, the inhabitants of this would have been under greater obligations to him : for we find that he soon got into Peter, upon whom the church of Christ is built, and has kept his station ever since ! If this dragon or devil be the Satan which is spoken of in the book of Job, we find that in Job's days he and the bible God were very friendly and sociable with each other; inasmuch that God refuses Satan nothing which he requests ; although it might distress and torment his own upright and faithful servants; yea, even the death of some of those creatures which he had been at the trouble of making and rearing up to the age of maturity. By which, I somehow suspect, that this satan was the most potent of the two ; at least, that he "held divided empire with Heaven's high King." Or why should a

God of love, who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, suffer such an adversary to walk up and down—to and fro throughout the earth, distressing and destroying those creatures, which he had made for his glory, without either opposing him, or making any resistance?

Reason and revelation.—An honest man will always obey his reason in preference to revelation; for it is, he will say, more certain that God is the author of human reason, than is the faculty in man of distinguishing the true from the false, than he is the author of any particular book.

Wise men are not profane when they deny the Gods of the common people; but they are profane when they think the Gods such as the common people believe them.

Wherefore will ye trouble yourselves seeking after the law of God, whilst ye have that which is common to all the world, and which is written on the tables of nature.

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